

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 SSM-05 /087 W

-----074529 270305Z /64

R 261610Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4593

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT POUCH

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY DUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN

SECDEF

DIA WASHDC

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 5490

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR

SUBJ: SYRIAN PRESS CONTINUES TO QUESTION U.S. MOTIVES IN MIDDLE  
EAST

REF: DAMASCUS 5431

1. FURTHER EDITORIALS HIGHLY CRITICAL OF U.S. HAVE APPEARED  
DAILY IN SYRIAN PRESS SINCE AUGUST 24 (REFTEL) AT BEST  
QUESTIONING U.S. WILL TO TAKE ACTIONS SEEN AS NECESSARY  
FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE, AND IT WORST ASSERTING  
U.S. DESIRE FOR PEACE INVOLVES GIVING ISRAEL EVERYTHING  
IT WANTS.

2. BAATH NATIONAL COMMAND MEMBER SAMI AL-ATTARI, WHO  
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PALESTINIAN AND SOMETIMES ACTS AS SYRIAN POINTMAN ON PLO  
ISSUES, WAS QUOTED AUGUST 25 IN THAWRA AS DECLARING  
"HE HOW BUILDS HIS HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS UPON U.S.  
PLANS WILL NOT REALIZE HIS PEOPLE'S ASPIRATIONS. EVENTS  
HAVE PROVEN AMERICA CANNOT BE A FAIR ARBITRATOR BUT THAT  
IT IS A NATURAL ALLY OF ISRAEL. THIS IS WHAT THE VANCE  
VISIT HAS CONFIRMED, SINCE U.S. PROPOSALS HAVE AIMED AT

PERPETUATING OCCUPATION, SPLITTING THE ARABS, AND NOT RECOGNIZING THE PLO AND THE NATIONAL RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIANS." HE WENT ON TO URGE MORE RELIANCE ON THE SOVIET UNION AND REJECTION OF THE U.S. AS THE SOLE MEDIATOR IN THE DISPUTE.

3. AL-BAATH EDITORIAL AUGUST 25 NOTED CARTER'S STATEMENT THAT U.S. WOULD NOT PRESSURE ISRAEL AND URGED THAT ARABS HEED LESSON THAT THEY MUST BE SELF-RELIANT AND "NOT RELY ON ANY OTHER PARTY." SECOND BAATH EDITORIAL ON SAME DAY WRITTEN BY LEADIST ABD-ILLAH AL-MALLAH BITTERLY CRITICIZED MAJOR ROLE ARABS HAD ALLOWED THE U.S. HE WROTE: "THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION ACTS AS THOUGH THERE IS NO OTHER ALTERNATIVE TO ITS GOOD OFFICES AND NOTHING PREVENTING IT FROM CONDUCTING A DIALOGUE WITH EACH PARTY SEPARATELY. THE U.S. ALTERNATIVES WOULD THEN REPLACE THE ARAB'S OWN DECISIONS. U.S. MEDIATION HAS BECOME A SUBSTITUTE FOR GENEVA. THE AMERICAN STRATEGY HAS NOW TAKEN THE FORM OF THE BEGIN PLAN WRAPPED UP WITH AMERICAN ASSURANCES." AFTER FURTHER LAMBASTING U.S. POLICY, AL-MALLAH WARNED: "A PRINCIPLED SYRIAN REJECTION (OF U.S. DIPLOMACY) COULD BE A PRELUDE TO AN ARAB ALTERNATIVE."

4. AUGUST 26 AL-BAATH EDITORIAL AGAIN CRITICAL OF U.S. POLICY BUT IN Milder AND MORE MEASURED TONE. RECENT UNCLASSIFIED

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WASHINGTON POST EDITORIAL CITED TO SHOW EVEN U.S. OBSERVERS RECOGNIZE "INCONSISTENCY AND SCHIZOPHRENIA" IN U.S. POLICY BETWEEN PRINCIPLE AND PRACTICE. EDITORIAL WARNED THAT CARTER'S PRESENT COURSE WOULD BRING U.S. TO DANGEROUS IMPASSE IN THE REGION. WRITER CONCLUDED THAT ARABS SHOULD INSURE THEIR STRATEGY DID NOT ALSO SUFFER FROM DIVERGENCE OF PRINCIPLE AND PRACTICE.

5. COMMENT:  
THIS PRESS CAMPAIGN APPEARS TO BE AMONG MOST CRITICAL ATTACK ON U.S. MIDDLE EAST POLICY TO APPEAR IN SYRIAN PRESS SINCE PRESIDENT CARTER ASSUMED OFFICE.  
MURPHY

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NNN



## Message Attributes

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**Type:** TE  
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Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009